

TRAILBLAZER

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council

Supporting Oregon Ridge Nature Center since 1982

Fall 2023

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Cover Photo by Michael Eversmier

President's Column

By Ralph Brown, M.D., President, Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council

When I was born nearly four score years ago, the CO2 level in the atmosphere was 310 ppm (parts per million). Today it is 422 ppm. In A Christmas Carol, Scrooge is shown a bleak future by the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come. He awakens Christmas morning to a kinder, more caring man.

What if I could summon the Ghost of Oregon Ridge Yet to Come? What if she showed you a land overrun with deer and invasive plants, devoid of most oak, hickory, maple trees, lacking in hardwood saplings, and populated by few songbirds? Would this change anything you do? In an age of instant messaging and 1-click buying, one is not encouraged to think long-term.

Whether it's the rising atmospheric CO2 levels or the deteriorating forest at Oregon Ridge, my generation has been a poor guardian of the future. We live in a world of wounds. John Muir totally missed the point when he ascribed the beauty of the Yosemite valley to nature alone. The sublime majesty of that land existed in large part because of the way it had been cared for by generations of native peoples.

Beautiful places, whether it's Paris or Yosemite, exist in the world because of enlightened stewardship.

This past year, Baltimore County requested the writing of a 20-year Master Plan for Oregon Ridge. After 50 years of short-term thinking, the county acknowledged the need for some long-range planning. The recommendations from

this report are in the final stages of approval. After a process that combined the in-depth evaluation of the park's natural resources with multiple avenues of input from park users, the Master Plan concluded that the protection and restoration of Oregon Ridge's forests, meadows, streams and trails are the highest priorities and the first goals.

Humans are capable of contemplating the future: Many millennia ago, one Homo Sapien, rather than eating all the seeds, decided to save a few to plant the following spring. Agriculture was on its way. Medieval cathedrals took centuries to build. The Iroquois practice the Seventh Generation Principle; their contemporary actions need to be of benefit to seven generations of descendants.

Can we be envoys from the present working to create a healthy Oregon Ridge as a gift to future generations? How much of the Master Plan is actually implemented and when that begins will be influenced by how involved we all are. A judge in Montana recently sided with a group of young activists and ruled that the state government was required to maintain and improve the environment for present and future generations.

If you believe that our government holds public lands in trust for its present and future citizens, and has the obligation to protect and maintain these precious resources, now is the time to get involved: write to your elected officials, volunteer at the nature center, join our council. Be a good ancestor.

Fall Migration

By Adele Clagett



Photo by Adele Clagett. For more visit www.birding.pictures.

The time of migration has begun. For some the distance is short. For others it may be thousands of miles. For most it is in the darkness they fly.

For some the journey may be their first; to a place where they have never been, yet they find their way. For others they have made this journey throughout their life, miles upon miles. For all, it is a perilous journey.

For some I say hello, welcome.

For others I say goodbye, be safe.

For all you feathered travelers, I wish you well.

As the cool autumn air sets in, a spectacle of nature unfolds across the skies. Fall bird migration, a timeless phenomenon, captivates birders and nature enthusiasts alike. It is a time when flocks of birds embark on an arduous journey to their winter homes. With precise instincts and an innate compass, these avian travelers navigate vast distances with uncanny accuracy. The fall migration is a delicate dance between birds and weather patterns. Favorable winds and atmospheric conditions guide the birds during their journey. Many species travel at night and drop down to feed in the mornings — so this is a good time to be on the lookout for birds you normally don't see in your area.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology has a BirdCast website (<https://birdcast.info>) that shows bird migration forecast maps, local bird migration alerts and much more. You can type in your location and find out what the expected migration forecast is for your area — low, medium, or high.

Spooky Invaders

By Pat Clagett, Trailblazer Editor

*Amidst the woods of green and gold,
Where native plants their tales have told,
A shadow lurks, a silent thief,
Invasive plants, with no relief.*

*They weave their roots, a tangled mass,
Through native soil, they swiftly pass,
Unwanted guests, they seize the ground,
Invasive plants, a spreading mound.*

*With blooms so bold and leaves so wide,
They push native flora to the side,
A disruption in the forest's song,
Invasive plants, they don't belong.*

*But warriors rise, with hearts ablaze,
To reclaim the land from invasive haze,
With hands that toil, and hearts that care,
They free the forest from the snare.*

*So let us join, this noble quest,
To rid the woods of invasive pests,
Restore the balance, let natives thrive,
Invasive plants, no longer shall they thrive.*

-Pat Clagett

"A visitor to Oregon Ridge Park will immediately see that its crowning glory is the forest, which covers roughly 90% of the park's 1100 acres. The value of this forest to the physical and mental health of its visitors is priceless!"

—Forest Bathing, by Polly Walker, MD

"The Oregon Ridge Park forest is a jewel in Baltimore County's park system, offering Park users numerous passive recreational trails through diverse forest types and habitats. The forest provides not only a quiet environment for experiencing its aesthetic beauty, but also numerous opportunities to observe some of the animals that depend upon this complex ecosystem for their survival, especially forest interior dwelling birds. While these assets enhance the enjoyment of those who visit this forest, other less-observable forest functions involve managing the movement of water and nutrients through the watershed. These functions do more than provide beneficial services to the human and wild communities that live in the watershed. In a positive feedback system, they also provide the ecological conditions for sustaining the long-term health and diversity of the forest itself.."

—from Oregon Ridge Park Forest Health Assessment And Forest Management Plan Baltimore County, MD Department of Environmental Protection & Resource Management, April 2007

Invasive vines provide a highly visible example of the destruction of the physical structure of an ecosystem. Oriental bittersweet and non-native wisteria are among the invasive vines that, given enough time, will kill trees. Controlling invasives, along with other efforts to maintain a healthy ecosystem require ongoing planning and stewardship. For that reason we are gratified that natural resource management is part of the 2023 Master Plan for Oregon Ridge Park.

https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/Invasive_plants_cards.pdf



Invasive vines wrapping around native tree. Photo by Pat Clagett.

Learn how you can help reduce the spread of invasives. This fall Oregon Ridge is organizing an invasives removal group and we need your help! “Stewardship Workshops” have been scheduled for October and November.

A brief overview of some of some of invasives will be presented, then each group will begin manually removing the invaders along the Red Trail, at the site of the future Woodland Restoration Garden. Bring water bottle, hat and wear closed toe shoes. Tools will be available, but you may want to bring your favorites along with some sturdy gloves.

See the Upcoming Programs & Events schedule for information about the upcoming Stewardship Workshops at Oregon Ridge. Registration is required, please visit our website to sign up: www.oregonridgenaturecenter.wildapricot.org



Japanese stiltgrass covering a section of the park's forest floor. Photo by Ralph Brown.

Pictures in the Park

By Naturalist and Nature Photographer, Michael Eversmier



Photo by Michael Eversmier

Walking through the park with a camera in hand helps us see things quite differently than we might on a typical hike or walk. A good nature photograph starts with an interesting scene or subject. Oregon Ridge has an abundance of both.

With your camera in hand, pause on your walk and take in the landscape around you. What do you find appealing to the eye? Look at the big picture — the sky, the forest, the meadow. Then look at what's right in front of you — a patch of colorful flowers, a fluttering butterfly, a singing bird in the marsh? Narrow your view even more and focus on the little things — the dainty pedals of a spring wildflower, the intricate pattern of a

spider's web, maybe an interesting arrangement of fallen leaves. You are in search of that perfect photograph. Add in a few learned skills, and now you can see your landscape photograph in the ideal proportions that please the eye.

Maybe you'll change a setting or two on your camera so it captures the image of a single flower that stands out amongst a meadow of thousands. Or combine a touch of creativity — a spritz of water from a small spray bottle that turns an ordinary spiderweb into glistening rings of beads. When was the last time you experienced a walk through the park like that?

This is the kind of hike we take during the Nature Center's "Pictures in The Park" program. For the past four years, both newbies and experienced photographers alike have met each month to learn new photographic techniques. Our walks have included capturing the golden hour at sunset, close-ups of flora and fauna, even abstract flower photography, and everything in between. Each person heads out into the park in search of their personal best nature photographs. Sometimes we'll even set a photo theme for the hike. When the evening is over, many will post their favorite images on our group's Facebook page.

Some join us with only their iPhone in hand, some with a nice point-and-shoot camera, and others with the latest DSLRs and multiple lenses. All are welcome! Participants recently were asked what it is they enjoy most about the program. The most frequent responses: a nice group, learning something new, and the picturesque setting.

"I like the different themes that let me learn new things and techniques. Working full-time with a family doesn't leave me with a lot of time to myself, I really enjoy the program, it's time well spent and a good way to get a little me time." - Jennifer



"I love taking photos of all four seasons in the park, each one has its own beauty. I also enjoy making new friends, learning something new every time, and practicing what I've learned. The park is the perfect setting for this and Michael makes every class unique and fun." - Linda

"I like the attendees and the program leader who inspire participants to be creative and inventive with their photos." - Karen

During the colder months, we meet on the second Sunday of the month in the afternoon, and during the warmer months, we meet on the second Tuesday of the month in the evening. Inclement weather? No problem, we have even done some sessions inside the Nature Center, photographing some of our animal ambassadors.



If you would like to join us, please visit the nature center's "Upcoming Programs & Events" page where you can register and view dates and times:

www.oregonridgenaturecenter.wildapricot.org

Photos on page 7 by Michael Eversmier

Oregon Ridge Tenant House: Living History

By Alan Penczek, Tenant House Volunteer Docent



Photo courtesy of Alan Penczek

What is this?

Do you recognize this object? Do you know what it was used for? You can see this, among many other historical artifacts excavated from the Tenant House at Oregon Ridge!

Hint:

As Fall approaches this 19th-century artifact becomes more valuable as the days grow shorter.

You can find the answer on page 11!

Visit the restored Tenant House at Oregon Ridge and learn about the site's rich mining history dating back to the 1850s!

Please contact the Nature Center at 410-887-1815 during regular business hours — Tuesday thru Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. to inquire about when the docent-staffed Tenant House will be open. Outside of regular business hours inquire via email to info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org.

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Woodland Garden at Oregon Ridge

By Elaine Kasmer, Maryland Master Naturalist and Master Gardener

Ever wonder what the original Oregon Ridge woodlands may have looked like?

As you stroll around Oregon Ridge Park, you may have enjoyed many of the “gardens” that dot the area around the Nature Center: tiny pocket gardens like the frog pond; raised boxes appealing to different senses; the children’s garden with tasty fruit and vegetables. The Pollinator Garden includes several areas, including traditional Native American cultural practices and an area of pollinator plants.

A new nature garden will soon be coming to the Park that we are calling the Woodland Restoration Garden. The purpose of this “garden” is to be a place where visitors can experience the beauty that woodlands in our Piedmont ecoregion might look like without the over-browsing by deer and the displacement of native plants by nonnative invasives (NNI). About an acre in size, it will be located not far from the Nature Center along the Red (Loggers) Trail.

This garden will require several years to develop. First deer exclusion fencing will be installed. NNI will be controlled in order to let native plants return naturally. Visitors eventually will be able to experience seasonal wildflowers, a variety of ferns and mosses, blooming shrubs, and native tree seedlings. Throughout the seasons you will see a succession of plants, starting with spring ephemerals that pop up, bloom, and go dormant before the trees fully leaf out and progressing through the appearance of woodland asters and goldenrods abuzz with tiny native bees, butterflies, and other pollinators in the fall. There will be pathways and places to quietly sit and observe, and subtle signage to help you learn about the marvelous and sometimes surprising interconnections between the plants and the creatures that utilize them.

The Restoration Garden will memorialize the efforts of several women in the 1980s whose efforts led to the acquisition of nearly 200 acres of mature woodland that was targeted for development (basically, all of the Yellow trail in the south end of the park) and to honor all those who contributed to this effort since then.

We have received funding from the state to establish this garden and will use past generous donations to our Nature Council to establish and sustain this garden. Eventually, we plan to have related new exhibit areas that make more connections to our Piedmont woodlands and meadows.

But funding is only part of the planning. We will need many volunteers to help make this dream come true.

There will be many opportunities over the years to help us establish and maintain this area, as well as continue to support all the other planted areas.

We will be learning and teaching about growing native plants: collecting seeds, making cuttings or divisions, rescuing threatened natives, using best practices to control NNI, exploring growing techniques like “winter-sowing”, and participating in nurturing the new plants until they are sturdy enough to thrive.

Article continues on page 11.

Volunteering at Oregon Ridge Nature Center

By Judy Breitenbach, Maryland Master Naturalist and Volunteer Chairperson

Oregon Ridge Nature Center is always searching for volunteers who love nature and the outdoors. If you are thinking about where you would like to volunteer your time, ask yourself: What are my passions? What skills or talents do I want to develop and share?

Did you know that volunteering had humble beginnings during medieval times? True fact! The first written evidence of volunteerism can be traced back to Britain where interest was generated to help the sick and the poor. In the United States volunteering was noted during the Revolutionary War when civilians volunteered to support the war effort. Prior to that, Ben Franklin established the Union Volunteer Fire Department in Philadelphia in 1736. In 1881 Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross, now one of the most globally renowned humanitarian organizations. Fast forward to the 21st century. The US Census Bureau and AmeriCorps published the “Current Population Survey” (CPS). The Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement. Data from this report showed that more than 60.7 million Americans volunteered through various organizations, contributing \$122.9 billion in economic value in 2021 alone. (<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/volunteer-week.html>)

When considering where you would like to volunteer your time and talents here are a few things to consider. What type of organization are you interested in? Do its Mission and Vision statements align with your values and beliefs? What type of volunteering training does it offer? How does the organization support its volunteers?

There are many documented benefits from volunteering which include — discovering a sense of purpose, being part of a community, increasing self-esteem, building on social skills, obtaining new knowledge, and staying physically and mentally active.

No matter your skill set or interests, Oregon Ridge has opportunities to match, including: weeding invasive plants, canoe maintenance, planting and maintaining the gardens, assisting with filling and maintaining the bird feeders, maintenance on the archery course, working on the exhibits, maintenance and repair of the nature play space, helping with marketing, supporting special events, becoming trail guides, helping with trail maintenance, and assisting staff during public programs.

For more information visit the Nature Center website:

www.OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org.

You can download and complete the Volunteer at Oregon Ridge form:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p848v7k>

Return the form by mail or email:

[\[info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org\]](mailto:info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org).

Someone from the Nature Center or Volunteer Committee will be in contact with you.

Oregon Ridge Tenant House: A Living History continued from page 8.

Answer: This is a “Courting Candle.”

The myth: The spiral design allowed the holder to be used as a timekeeping device for protective parents. If a daughter's suitor came to call, the parent could adjust the height of the candle, and when the candle burnt down to the metal at the top, that signaled it was the proper time for the suitor to leave.



The reality: The open design allows the candle to burn to the very end, unlike a traditional candle holder. Candles were so expensive during this time that the number of candles you could afford to light a room was a sign of status.

Woodland Restoration Garden at Oregon Ridge continued from page 9.

We would love to establish an ongoing group of native plant lovers who will help spread the word, and share their expertise.

For more information visit the Nature Center website: www.OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org. You can download and complete the Volunteer at Oregon Ridge form at <https://tinyurl.com/2p848v7k>. Return the form by mail or email: [\[info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org\]](mailto:info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org). Someone from the Nature Center or Volunteer Committee will be in contact with you.

ORNCC Speaker Series

The ORNC Council Speakers Series presents informative and engaging talks on a wide variety of nature-related topics by some of the area's leading specialists in the environmental sciences, natural history and related fields. This Fall, the ORNC Council is delighted to welcome back two of our liveliest and most popular speakers.

An Evening of Terror: Spotted Lanternfly and Other Invasive Insects

Date: Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 7-8:30 pm

Speaker: Michael J. Raupp, Ph.D.

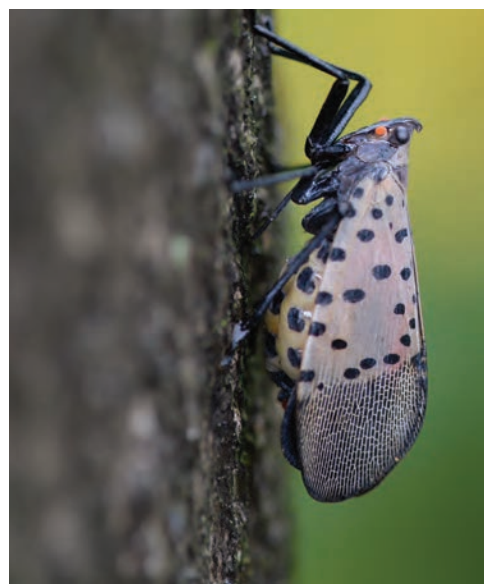
Place: Oregon Ridge Nature Center Auditorium



As part of a never-ending stream of invasive species arriving in the US, the spotted lanternfly is on the move in the eastern United States. Since it was first detected in Berks County, PA, in 2014, it has now been found in more than a dozen states. We will learn how to detect spotted lanternfly, key aspects of its seasonal phenology, what plants are at risk and damage associated with lanternfly feeding on shade and fruit trees. We will hear about integrated approaches (IPM) to thwart this pest. We will also visit other new invasives headed our way including zig zag sawfly, laurel wilt disease, box tree moth, and a few others.

Mike Raupp
is Professor
Emeritus at
the University

of Maryland. With a dozen awards for writing, scholarship and scientific outreach, Mike is a regular expert guest on national network and cable television and on radio with more than 200 appearances and 1,400 presentations. His "Bug of the Week" website, www.bugoftheweek.com and YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/BugOfTheWeek reach tens of thousands of viewers weekly in more than 200 countries around the world. His most recent book, *26 Things That Bug Me*, introduces youngsters to the wonders of insects and natural history while *Managing Insect and Mites on Woody Landscape Plants* published by TCIA is a standard for the arboricultural industry. Mike holds a B.S. and M.S. from Rutgers University and a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park.



Female spotted lanternfly

Photos courtesy of Mike Raupp

Should I Stay or Should I Go? How Maryland's Wildlife Deals with Winter

Date: Wednesday, November 15; 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Speaker: Kerry Wixted

Place: Oregon Ridge Nature Center Auditorium



What does wildlife do in winter? Some decide to stay and tough it out or hibernate while others decide to go to warmer environments. Learn about some of the complex strategies and varied adaptations Maryland's wildlife undergo to get through colder weather and hear how some of that is changing.

Kerry Wixted is a Maryland naturalist with more than 15 years' experience studying flora and fauna of Maryland. A project-driven ecologist and self-proclaimed nature nerd with a penchant for education and outreach, Kerry is a dynamic and popular speaker, educator and trainer. She is currently the Amphibian, Reptile, and Invasive Species Program Manager for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Kerry previously worked for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Her volunteer activities include more than 20 years

banding and processing Northern Saw-Whet Owls with Project OwlNet in Maryland. Kerry holds a B.S. degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Management from Frostburg State University, and a M.S. degree in Biology from West Virginia University.



Black bear cub



Luna moth

Photos courtesy of Kerry Wixted

Fall Programs at Oregon Ridge Nature Center

All Programs Require Advance Registration unless otherwise noted.

www.OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org.

Some programs open to members first. If you are a member, make sure to sign into your account to see all programs that are open for registration.

Recurring Programs and Clubs

Bookworm Story Time

First Friday of the Month; 11 - 11:45 a.m.

Nature Buds

Thursdays; 10 - 11 a.m.

September 28 – Rockfish

October 5 – Worms

October 12 – Centipedes/Millipedes

October 19 – Bats

October 26 – Spiders

November 2 – Skunks

November 9 – Moles

November 16 – Foxes

November 30 – Bears

December 7 – Woodpeckers

December 14 – Coyotes

December 21 – Deer

December 28 – Bobcats

Morning Bird Walk

Fridays; October 13 and

November 17; 8 - 9:30 a.m.

Pictures in the Park

Tuesdays, October 10; 6 - 8 p.m. and Sunday,

November 12; 1 - 3 p.m.

Senior Stroll

The third Sunday of the month; 12 - 1:30 p.m.

Nurture with Nature

Third Wednesday of the Month; 11 - 11:45 a.m.

October 18 – Sand

November 15 – Furs and Feathers

Nature Informed Therapy Workshop

Thursdays, September 28; October 5, 12, 19, 26;

November 2; 5 - 6:30 p.m.

Home School Nature Days — All About Birds!

Fridays, October 20, 27; November 3 and 10

Morning Session 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Afternoon Session 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Festivals and Special Events

Fall Family Hike

Saturday, October 14; 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Honey Harvest Festival – Advance Registration Appreciated

Saturday, October 7 and Sunday, October 8;

11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Tricks and Treats on the Ridge – Advance Registration Required

Saturday, October 28; 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Evening Programs

Harvest Full Moon Night Hike

Friday, September 29; 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Astronomy in the Park: A Night Under the Stars

Friday, October 20; 7 - 9 p.m.

Spooky Night Hike

Friday, October 27; 6 - 8 p.m.

Astronomy in the Park: The Gas Giants

– Juniper and Saturn

Friday, November 17; 7 - 9 p.m.

Public Programs

Paddle the Lake

Sunday, October 1; 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Nature Book Club – Underland: A Deep Time Journey

Monday, October 2; 7 - 8 p.m.

Fall Family Hike

Saturday, October 14; 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Wicked in the Woods!

Saturday, October 14; 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Apple Cider Please!

Sunday, October 15; 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Stewardship Workshop *(volunteers will learn about invasive plants removal)*

Sunday, October 15, 1 - 4 p.m.

ORNC Council Speaker Series – An evening of terror: Spotted lanternfly and other invasive insects

Dr. Michael J. Raupp, *Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland; BS/MS Rutgers University and Ph.D. University of Maryland College Park*

Tuesday, October 17; 7 - 8:30 p.m. (in the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Auditorium)

Leaf Man

Saturday, October 21; 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Itsy Bitsy Spider

Sunday, October 22; 10 - 11 a.m.

Fall Foliage

Sunday, October 29; 1 - 3 p.m.

Wild Hamsters!

Saturday, November 4; 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Mighty Oaks and Little Acorn Fairies

Sunday, November 5; 1 - 2 p.m.

Fall Family Hike

Saturday, November 11; 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Stewardship Workshop *(volunteers will learn about invasive plants removal)*

Saturday, November 11, 9 a.m. - noon

Getting Ready for Winter

Sunday, November 12; 1 - 2:30 p.m.

ORNC Council Speaker Series – Should I Stay or Should I Go? How Maryland's Wildlife Deals with Winter **Kerry Wixted**; *Maryland Naturalist with over 15 years' experience studying the flora and fauna of Maryland.*

Wednesday, November 15; 7 - 8:30 p.m. (in the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Auditorium)

Create Your Own Terrarium

Saturday, November 18 or Sunday, November 19; 1 - 3 p.m.

Black Friday opt-Outside Hike

Friday, November 24; 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Turkey Tales

Saturday, November 25 or Sunday, November 26; 1 - 2 p.m.



Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council
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www.OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org

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Renew Now and Sign up a Friend, too!

Many branches make a strong tree. Many members make a strong Council. Use this membership form to renew and give a copy to a friend.

Make checks payable to: ORNC Council, Inc., 13555 Beaver Dam Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030.

You can also join or renew online. Please visit:

www.OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org/Join-Donate-Volunteer/

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☐ Email only ☐ Paper copy via US Mail as well

Stay in touch!

info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org
(410) 887-1815



For upcoming programs at ORNC, visit:
www.OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org/



Or scan the QR Code above

To make a donation to ORNC, visit:
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